

MyBus Review – Update on Stage 1 Actions

Date of meeting 3 November 2023

Date of report 9 October 2023

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To update the Committee on actions to be taken forward following the completion of Stage 1 of the MyBus review.

2. Background to report

As reported to the Committee in April 2023¹, Stage 1 of the review of SPT's MyBus service has now been completed.

Through the review six key actions, summarised in this report, were identified for implementation to be completed over the course of 24 months. To take forward the identified actions, a MyBus review Working Group was established inclusive of SPT officers from relevant SPT departments.

3. Outline of proposals

The findings of the Stage 1 MyBus review set out a number of actions outlined below:

- Action 1: Revise MyBus user eligibility criteria and simplify the registration process
- Action 2: Revise bookings and trip scheduling process
- Action 3: Revise journey purpose restrictions
- Action 4: Improve marketing of MyBus
- Action 5: Improve current service provision (Timescale: up to 24 months)
- Action 6: Undertake wider Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service redesign (Timescale: up to 24 months)

In order to take forward the above action an internal officer led MyBus group was formed with representation from the following SPT departments:

- Policy and Planning
- Bus Strategy and Delivery
- Marketing

¹ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/s5fji3yu/ops280423_agenda6.pdf

- Contact Centre

The group, chaired jointly by the Head of Bus Strategy and Delivery and Director of Finance and Corporate Support, meets on an eight-weekly cycle. Progress by the group against the actions noted above is summarised below:

Action 1: Revise MyBus user eligibility criteria and simplify the registration process

Update: A new simplified online registration form has been developed for service users. The new registration form can be found at the following link:

https://www.spt.co.uk/media/zqfbouto/mybus_fasttrackbookingform.pdf

The new registration form is intended to make registration simpler for MyBus users, requires less information and can be completed electronically, reducing administrative burden on SPT contact centre staff. Going forward, the MyBus eligibility criteria will be further reviewed by the Working Group to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Action 2: Revise bookings and trip scheduling process

Update: The SPT Contact Centre team have been accepting/booking service users on a 'first come first served' basis from 1100hrs on the day prior to the day of travel. To further assist service users, a trial of an earlier two-day trip confirmation (i.e. two days prior to the day of travel) was undertaken. However, early results suggested that this change appeared to negatively impact on the trip acceptance rate and scheduling efficiency. It was therefore paused for the time being. The working group are now considering the lessons learned from the trial and considering further options to improve the booking and scheduling process.

Action 3: Revise journey purpose restrictions

Update: In respect of journey purpose restrictions, it has been clarified to SPT Contact Centre staff / MyBus scheduling team that journeys for the purpose of visiting friends and family within hospitals are acceptable within the scheme. For clarity, journey requests for hospital appointments are not permissible, given the variability of MyBus pickup and drop-off times and user requirements - this remains a consideration for NHS boards / Scottish Ambulance Service.

Further to the above, engagement has been undertaken by SPT officers with NHS Lanarkshire colleagues to discuss patient transport issues and the complementarity of both MyBus and community transport services. Next steps are for SPT to coordinate further discussions with all NHS Boards in Strathclyde, with a view to supporting those travelling to access healthcare services. Further updates on these discussions will be provided in due course.

Action 4: Improve marketing of MyBus

Update: To improve awareness and usage of the web booking service amongst MyBus users, a promotion was undertaken week commencing 24 July 2023 with a maildrop to all users and the offer of vouchers for those choosing to utilise the online web booking service before the end of September 2023. The results suggest a 10% average increase on web bookings per week.

Wider awareness of MyBus has also improved as demand has increased in general since the marketing campaign – around 7% comparing year on year. The working group are considering further promotional events to support the service going forward.

In addition to the above, a MyBus fleet livery review was undertaken. The review highlighted a number of issues regarding the consistent application of MyBus livery and a need to ensure consistency of scheme details such as phone number(s) and web booking details. Subsequently a MyBus livery design guide is in the process of being developed by the marketing team for review by the working group and to consider how to best implement any proposed changes.

Action 5: Improve current service provision (Timescale: up to 24 months)

Update: In respect of driver standards, SPT officers have commenced engagement with both MyBus operators and the Community Transport Association (CTA). In particular, the CTA operate the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS) - for further details see <https://ctauk.org/training/midas/> which offers bespoke training that may be of benefit to the MyBus service. Officers will provide a further update on these discussions in due course.

Additionally, supplier engagement on a replacement cloud-based scheduling system remains ongoing. Scoping of future system scheduling requirements is now underway (inclusive of GCC requirements for scheduling of their Assisted Special Needs (ASN) fleet). An SPT Capital support bid for a new scheduling system is also being prepared.

Action 6: Undertake wider Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service redesign (Timescale: up to 24 months)

Update: Building on the actions summarised above, the working group continue to explore options to enhance the MyBus service design and delivery including an examination of DRT in rural areas where specific challenges can exist due to the nature of the population spread and longer scheduling distances needed. Examples include partnership working with local community transport organisations to undertake voluntary club transport previously undertaken via MyBus that better fits CT's service profile. Additionally, through the DRT contract renewals process for Summer 2024, the team are exploring options to incorporate additional 'peak only' flexible resource, to efficiently facilitate the transport of more users at these times. Further updates on the MyBus service design and service enhancements will be provided in due course.

Alongside this, SPT officers are currently considering a funding application to Transport Scotland's Community Bus Fund (CBF) including a longer-term review / assessment of rural transport provision (including community transport, MyBus / DRT, NHS services and the supported bus network).

Overall Progress against actions

Overall, it is evident that the group has made positive progress against the actions agreed as part of the Stage 1 MyBus review, as detailed above. Further updates on the progress of the group on the agreed actions will be provided in due course.

4. Committee action

The Committee is asked to note the progress made in addressing the key actions summarised in section 3, identified through Stage 1 of the MyBus review.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Support RTS objective to improve the accessibility, affordability, availability, and safety of the transport system.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>No financial consequences at present however future action plan changes may impact of the costs of My Bus.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

Equalities consequences	<i>Appropriate statutory assessments, including an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the review process.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

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